

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
**Administration and Finance Subcommittee**  
**Report on Warrant Article 3**

The Administration and Finance subcommittee of the Advisory Committee met on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, for a discussion, public hearing, and vote on Article 3, submitted by the Town Treasurer/Collector:

To see if the Town will authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, to enter into Compensating Balance Arrangement(s) for FY2018 in accordance with General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F, or act on anything relative thereto.

Attending were A&F subcommittee members John Doggett, Dennis Doughty, and Neil Gordon, and Jeana Franconi, Finance Director, and Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator.

RECOMMENDATION: By a vote of 3-0-0, the Administration and Finance subcommittee recommends a vote for FAVORABLE ACTION on Article 3.

**BACKGROUND:**

Favorable Action on Article 3 would authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, to enter into compensating balance agreements for FY2020 in accordance with General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F. These agreements would allow the Town to maintain specified amounts of deposits, which may or may not be interest bearing, in exchange for the reduction or elimination of cash payments for bank services.

**DISCUSSION:**

The proposed Town budget generally assumes that the Town's available funds are invested in interest bearing accounts, and that banking services are paid for in the ordinary course. This authorization gives the Treasurer the authority to negotiate a reduction or elimination of fees for services, in exchange for deposits or Town funds in non-interest bearing accounts. Compensating balance agreements add value when the savings in fees more than offsets the loss of interest income, or when services can be bargained for among competing banks. They are a valuable cash management and services procurement tool. Town Meeting has authorized these arrangements since the mid-1980s.

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
**Administration and Finance Subcommittee**  
**Report on Warrant Article 7**

The Administration and Finance subcommittee of the Advisory Committee met on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2019, for a discussion, public hearing, and vote on Article 7, submitted by the Board of Selectmen:

To see if the Town will, in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 64, authorize the payment of one or more of the bills of the previous years, which may be legally unenforceable due to the insufficiency of the appropriations therefore, and appropriate from available funds, a sum or sums of money therefore, or act on anything relative thereto.

Attending were A&F subcommittee members John Doggett, Dennis Doughty and Neil Gordon, and Melissa Goff, deputy Town Administrator.

RECOMMENDATION: The Administration and Finance subcommittee by a vote of 3–0–0 recommends a vote of NO ACTION on Article 7.

**BACKGROUND:**

General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 64, requires the specific appropriation of funds for the payment of bills from a prior fiscal year.

**DISCUSSION:**

As of the date of the subcommittee meeting, the Town has not identified any unpaid bills from a prior fiscal year.

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Administration and Finance Subcommittee**

**Report on Warrant Article 8**

The Administration and Finance subcommittee of the Advisory Committee met on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2019, for a discussion, public hearing, and vote on Article 8, submitted by the Board of Assessors:

To see if the Town will elect to establish an additional property tax exemption for fiscal year 2020 which shall be uniform for all exemptions, in accordance with Section 4 of Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986, as amended by Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988, and accept said Section 4, as amended, or act on anything relative thereto.

Attending were A&F subcommittee members John Doggett, Dennis Doughty and Neil Gordon, and Gary McCabe, Town Assessor, Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Administration and Finance subcommittee by a vote of 3–0–0 recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on Article 8.

**BACKGROUND:** This article provides for an increase in the property tax exemptions for certain classes of individuals, including surviving spouses, the elderly, and the blind and disabled veterans. The proposed increases, which require annual reauthorizations, have been approved annually since FY1989.

These property tax exemptions, in their base amounts are mandated by State law. State law also provides for a local, optional increase in the mandated exemptions, of up to 100%

**DISCUSSION:** The estimated annual cost of the increased property tax exemptions is approximately \$54,000, an amount which is fairly stable year to year. About 107 individuals claimed these exemptions last year. The increased property tax exemptions are funded from the tax abatement overlay reserve account. Consequently, there is no impact on the Budget and no appropriation required by Town Meeting, only the granting of approval for the Board of Assessors.

The following is from the 2018 report. We were advised by the Mr. McCabe that there is just one less participant currently, in a category that was not specified. (The table will be updated for the Combined Reports.)

<b>Category</b>		<b>State</b>	<b>Brookline</b>
Surviving Spouse	(17D)	\$175	\$350
Veteran (10% Disability)	(22) 57	\$400	\$800
Veteran (loss of one hand, foot or eye)	(22A) 1	\$750	\$1,500
Veteran (loss of two hands, feet or eyes)	(22B) 0	\$1,250	\$2,500

Veteran (special housing)	(22C)	0	\$1,500	\$3,000
Veteran (certain widows of soldiers)	(22D)	0	\$250	\$500
Veteran (100% disability, cannot work)	(22E)	9	\$1,000	\$2,000
Blind	(37A)	42	\$500	\$1,000
Elderly	(41C)	14	\$500	\$1,000

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
**Administration and Finance Subcommittee**  
**Report on Conditions of Appropriation**  
**(Warrant Article 9)**

The Administration and Finance Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee met on April 4th, 2019, for a discussion and public hearing on the Conditions of Appropriation for Warrant Article 9.

In attendance were A&F Subcommittee members John Doggett, Dennis Doughty and Neil Gordon; and Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator and Zoe Lynn, Sustainability Coordinator.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Administration and Finance Subcommittee by a vote of 3-0-0 recommends **FAVORABLE ACTION** on all Conditions of Appropriation contained in Warrant Article 9 other than item 37, the Baldwin School funding, on which the Subcommittee has no recommendation.

**BACKGROUND:**

Warrant Article 9 is the annual budget appropriations article, for FY2020. Included in this omnibus budget article are operating budgets, special appropriations, enterprise funds, revolving funds, and conditions of appropriation. This is the culmination of work that officially began with the publication of the Town Administrator's Financial Plan in February. The proposed budget has since been reviewed by numerous sub-committees of the Advisory Committee, the full Advisory Committee, and the Select Board. The motion ultimately offered to Town Meeting is by the Advisory Committee.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Subcommittee considered 5 amendments to WA9 for the FY2020 budget, 3 from Katherine Scanlon TMM3 on items #2, #24 and #34, presented by Zoe Lynn, one from Carla Benka on item #33, Chair of the Capital Subcommittee, and one on item from Steve Kanen, Chair of the Planning and Regulation Subcommittee.

Zoe Lynn presented an amendment for each of the following:

#2 - Appropriate \$600,000, or any other sum, to be expended under the direction of the Building Commission, with any necessary contracts over \$100,000 to be approved by the Select Board, for making extraordinary repairs to Fire Stations.

#24 - Raise and appropriate \$150,000, to be expended under the direction of the Building Commissioner, with any necessary contracts over \$100,000 to be approved by the Select Board for HVAC equipment in Town and School facilities.

#34 - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, \$2,000,000 to be expended under the direction of the Building Commission, with any necessary contracts over \$100,000 to be approved by the Select Board and the School Committee, for a feasibility study to understand the extent of facility and 8 programming deficiencies, and to explore the formulation of a solution to those deficiencies, at the Pierce School located at 50 School Street in the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts and shown as Parcel I.D. No. 172/03-00, in the Town of Brookline Assessor's map and database, for which feasibility study the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program

based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in connection with the feasibility study in excess of any grant that may be received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town.

The proposed amendment is to attach the following language to each of these building-related CIP items: “Provided recommendations must be consistent with the Brookline Climate Action Plan zero greenhouse gas emissions goal.”

The Committee had concerns about these amendments as the language is vague and unspecific. The Committee felt that a condition needs to be objectively measurable, so that the Town Finance Department can determine whether the condition is met. This amendment provides no measurable standards, and therefore requires interpretation beyond the scope of duties of the Finance Department.

One member commented that this is like a backdoor resolution using the conditions of appropriation as the vehicle after the date to file a warrant article has passed.

The Committee voted NO ACTION on the amendments by a vote of 3-0-0.

The Chair of the Capital Subcommittee had forwarded a condition of appropriation to the Committee which was as to amend item #33 as follows (new language is underscored):

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow, or transfer from available funds, \$82,900,000, or any other sum, to be expended under the direction of the Building Commission, with any necessary contracts over \$100,000 to be approved by the Select Board and the School Committee to renovate and expand the Baldwin School, provided that such funds are not committed, encumbered or expended until such time as the National Park Service has made a final determination regarding the Conversion Issue relative to the Baldwin Playground and the lawsuits pertaining to the Baldwin School have been resolved.

There was concern expressed that there was no date certain, although the amendment was event driven and therefore had a measurable condition. Also expressed were, would this create a precedent that would encourage the filing of lawsuits? The question raised was how much risk the town should assume.

Alternatives were discussed from no action on the condition, supplying a date certain, free up some funds to ensure the project would not stop due to lack of resources and hold back a major portion, and remove the word final from the NPS condition.

The Committee decided that it would not express an opinion on this amendment.

The Committee then discussed Mr. Kanes' proposed amendment to item #42: Raise and appropriate \$1,978,225, to be expended under the direction of the Commissioner of Public Works, with any necessary contracts over \$100,000 to be approved by the Select Board, for the rehabilitation of streets.

Mr. Kanes noted that last year, \$1.71 million was requested for Street Rehabilitation funds. The Advisory Committee recommended - and Town Meeting agreed - that an additional \$1.4 million of available dollars from the Parking Meter Fund should be added to the initial request. This year, Parking Meter funds are being reserved for contingency purposes in the Gateway East project, and only \$1.75 million in CIP funds is available for the Street Rehabilitation program. This allocation falls short of the investment needed to maintain a PCI of 73 and keep the backlog relatively sustainable. Mr. Kanes proposed an amendment, as follows:

To the extent that the Parking Meter Fund is not utilized for contingency purposes in the Gateway East project, an amount not to exceed \$1 million shall be allocated for the Street Rehabilitation program.

The Deputy Town Administrator suggested that no action on this amendment is needed as the moving of funds to and from accounts is under the control of the Advisory Committee. The Committee proposed taking no action on this amendment.

The final point of discussion was about a new section for revolving funds, including building fund expenditure for the newly acquired Oak St properties, the Library fund for a copier program and a new School Department fund.

By a vote of 3-0-0 the Administration and Finance Subcommittee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on all Conditions of Appropriation contained in Warrant Article 9 other than item 37 on which it has no opinion.